



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE  
and  
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

### MONTANA PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS FOR 1956

Montana farmers have expressed their intentions to seed 5,059,000 acres to principal crops this spring which is 1 percent more than last year's seedings of 5,002,000 acres. The March 1 report points to a rather sharp reductions in acreages of barley, rye, flaxseed and potatoes. Smaller reductions are indicated for corn and oats. These decreases are only partially offset by larger acreages of all spring wheat, dry beans and all hay. The most significant change from last year is the indicated sharp increase in durum wheat seedings which are more than double last year's acreage. Further shifts, if any, will depend largely upon weather and soil conditions at seeding time as well as the survival of winter wheat.

Subsoil moisture reserves are generally average throughout the State and prospective water supplies are above normal. Crop prospects for the coming season appear to be quite good although seed bed preparation has been delayed by frozen soil and wet fields.

**WHEAT:** Growers intend to seed 2,982,000 acres to all spring wheat which is 13 percent more than the 1955 plantings of 2,639,000 acres. This acreage is 20 percent less than the 10-year, 1945-1954, average of 3,736,000 acres. The durum wheat acreage this year now indicated at 596,000 acres, as compared to 277,000 acres last year may change as the result of the new government program. The current spring wheat acreage combined with the winter wheat estimate of 1,888,000 acres totals 4,870,000 acres of all wheat. This acreage is about 1 percent greater than the gross seedings for 1955. The winter wheat is still in a dormant stage and the condition of the crop is uncertain. Most of the acreage abandoned is expected to be reseeded to spring wheat or other grain crops.

**FEED GRAINS:** A sharp reduction is indicated in the acreage of barley. Farmers intend to plant 1,218,000 acres or 16 percent less than the 1,450,000 acres seeded last year, but 56 percent more than the 1945-54 average. Oat seedings will be reduced 8 percent to 500,000 acres and will be 3 percent below the 10-year average. Prospective corn plantings of 211,000 acres are 4,000 acres smaller than a year ago. The aggregate of these three crops totals 1,929,000 acres, compared with 2,209,000 acres in 1955.

**OTHER CROPS:** Flaxseed plantings are indicated to be 66,000 acres or 10 percent less than the 73,000 acres planted last year. Potato plantings will be cut to 8,800 acres, as compared to 9,900 acres last year. Prospective plantings of sugar beets amounting to 51,000 acres are the same as last year. Farmers and ranchers intend to cut 2,481,000 acres of hay this year, 1 percent more than a year ago.

### MONTANA: PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS FOR 1956

CROP	AVERAGE 1945-54			ACRES PLANTED		
	Acres	Yield per Pl. Acre		Indicated	1956 as %	
	Planted	Amount	Unit	1955	1956	of 1955
	(1000 Acres)			(1000 Acre)	(1000 Acres)	(Percent)
Corn .....	187	14.7	Bu.	215	211	98
Spring wheat....	3,736	13.6	"	2,639	2,982	113
Oats.....	513	21.3	"	544	500	92
Barley.....	782	23.6	"	1,450	1,218	84
Flaxseed.....	118	6.1	"	73	66	90
Beans, dry.....	15	1,523	Lbs.	14	15	107
Peas, dry .....	11	1,212	"	6	7	117
Sugar beets .....	63.7	11.4	Tons	50.8	51	100
Potatoes.....	12.9	194	Bu.	9.9	8.8	89
All hay 1/.....	2,301	1.13	Tons	2,456	2,481	101

1/ Data for hay relates to acres for harvest.

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(Over)

U. S. PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS, MARCH 1, 1956

Growers' March intentions point to a moderate reduction from last year's level in the combined acreage of the Nation's crops. Feed grain acreage may be notably smaller than last year because of important reductions in corn, oats and barley. Spring planted food grains will exceed last year's total because of larger spring wheat plantings, especially of durum varieties, although rice planting will be sharply reduced. Large increases in acreage of soybeans and flax are planned.

Changes this year from early prospects for different crops may be somewhat greater than usual after all influences have been reflected. Some allotment programs, notably tobacco and durum wheat, have already been modified since farmers reported their acreage intentions about March 1. Legislation now being considered by Congress may also result in acreage shifts if adopted before planting is completed. Future weather is also a factor. Winter wheat acreage in much of the Southern Plains may still be lost from drought and wind erosion with varying possibilities for replanting to other crops. The season is somewhat backward over much of the Nation, allowing added time for late decisions. Soil moisture supplies now appear generally favorable with the exception of the Southern Plains and extensive areas in Western Corn Belt States. Western irrigation water prospects are best in years.

Present indications for the 16 crops included in this report point to a total of about 283 million acres for these crops--3.4 million acres less than in 1955. Principal reductions from last year, by crops are: corn, 2.9 million acres; oats, 2 million acres; barley, 1.3 million acres; rice, one-fourth million acres. Slight reductions in acreage are also in prospect for potatoes, sweetpotatoes, peanuts, dry beans and tobacco. Sharpest reductions on a percentage basis are in view for rice, sweetpotatoes, tobacco and dry beans. Increases are expected for soybeans amounting to 2.1 million acres, spring wheat 0.7 million acres--mostly in durum wheat, and moderate to slight increases for hay crops, sorghums, dry peas and sugar beets.

The 59 principal crops regularly included in official estimates now seem likely to have a total acreage planted or grown in 1956 of about 352 million acres. This would be the smallest total for these crops since 1942, over 3 million acres less than last year and 5.5 million less than the 10-year average. Moderate decreases are in prospect in about three-fourths of all States. Included in this tentative appraisal for 1956 is the allotted acreage of cotton, the planted winter wheat acreage as estimated last December, and approximations which seem reasonable for other crops not yet covered by survey indications.

CROP	PLANTED ACREAGES			
	Average	1955	Indicated	1956 as pct. of 1955
	1945-54	Thousands	1956 Thousands	Percent
Corn, all .....	84,815	81,577	78,686	96.5
All spring wheat .....	20,138	13,891	14,605	105.1
Durum .....	2,615	1,424	2,021	141.9
Other spring .....	17,523	12,467	12,584	100.9
Oats .....	44,307	48,021	46,063	95.9
Barley .....	11,713	16,102	14,773	91.7
Flaxseed .....	4,367	5,192	5,465	105.3
Rice .....	1,894	1,842	1,597	86.7
Sorghums for all purposes .....	14,383	24,113	24,198	100.4
Potatoes .....	1,858	1,452	1,394	96.0
Sweetpotatoes .....	466	364	323	88.7
Tobacco 1/ .....	1,726	1,510	1,366	90.4
Beans, dry edible .....	1,676	1,660	1,535	92.5
Peas, dry field .....	369	325	377	116.0
Soybeans 2/ .....	14,290	19,669	21,760	110.6
Peanuts 2/ .....	2,943	2,004	1,923	96.0
Hay 1/.....	73,836	73,984	74,305	100.4
Sugar beets .....	847	798	829	103.8

1/Acreage harvested. 2/Grown alone for all purposes.

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